

Don't wait – the future and change are coming to your town faster than you can imagine. Contact your community government or one of the organizations listed, and lend your ideas to improving the quality of life where you live.

Through your input, the NHDOT strives to achieve full and fair participation of all affected communities.

Other pieces in the Citizen's Guide to Transportation series include:

- #1 Having Your Say in transportation projects that shape your community
- #2 Planning the Future of New Hampshire Transportation
- #3 Project Development: Making transportation projects a reality
- #4 Access Management
- #5 Transportation Enhancement Program
- #6 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program

8.1.01

Participate in the Transportation Planning Process

New Hampshire Department of Transportation

John O. Morton Building
1 Hazen Drive
P.O.Box 483
Concord, NH 03302-0483
603.271.3344
Fax 603.271.8093
bureau46@dot.state.nh.us
www.nhdot.com

North Country Council

107 Glessner Rd.
Bethlehem, NH 03574
603-444-6303
fax 603-444-7588
nccinc@moose.ncia.net
www.nccouncil.org

Lakes Region Planning Commission

Humiston Building, 103 Main Street, Ste. 3
Meredith, NH 03253
603-279-8171
fax 603-279-0200
lrpc@lakesrpc.org
www.lakesrpc.org

Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

77 Bank Street
Lebanon, NH 03766
603-448-1680
fax 603-448-0170
info@uvlsrpc.org
www.uvlsrpc.org

Southwest Region Planning Commission

20 Central Square, 2nd Floor
Keene, NH 03431
603-357-0557
fax 603-357-7440
swrpc@top.monad.net
www.swrpc.org

Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

28 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-226-6020
fax 603-226-6023
mtardiff@cnhrpc.org
www.cnhrpc.org

Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

438 Dubuque Street
Manchester, NH 03102-3546
603-669-4664
fax 603-669-4350
email@snhpc.org
www.snhpc.org

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

115 Main Street, P.O. Box 847
Nashua, NH 03061
603-883-0366
fax 603-883-6572
andrew@nashuarpc.org
www.nashuarpc.org

Rockingham Regional Planning Commission

156 Water Street
Exeter, NH 03833
603-778-0885
fax 603-778-9183
email@rpc-nh.org
www.rpc.nh.org

Strafford Regional Planning Commission

3 Ridge Street
Dover, NH 03820-2505
603-742-2523
fax 603-742-7986
sprc@strafford.org
www.mv.com/ipusers/plan

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New Hampshire Department of Transportation
Citizen's Guide to Transportation Series

THE TRANSPORTATION/ LAND USE RELATIONSHIP



New Hampshire's population and its economy are growing. New homes and businesses are being built. This in turn requires improved transportation facilities, which in New Hampshire, given our rural nature and dependence on cars, often results in new and wider roads. But times are changing, and as we strive to maintain our rural character, we recognize that we cannot continue to build enough new roadways to accommodate the burgeoning transportation demand. The expense of right-of-way, construction, maintenance, and the resulting transformation of our countryside, require all of us to rethink how we use the land and how it relates to transportation needs, through local land use planning.

How can land use planning do this? By creating disincentives to sprawl, which heightens our need to drive and worsens traffic congestion. By fostering nodal development, which centralizes destinations, and reduces the need to drive as often as we might otherwise. By limiting access points or combining driveways so the existing road system can operate more safely, increasing its ability to carry more traffic without additional widening. But meaningful land use policies are difficult to implement. Here's why:

A community may view a segment of highway as a ready market for local businesses, while the region may view the highway's role as being a through connection to other communities;

Municipalities control land use, while the State controls the highway and property owners have rights, too;

Limits to development are seen as a threat to land owners' equity; and,

It is difficult to get people to see the inevitable degradation of the highway before it happens – an individual curb cut's impact on a highway is minimal, but the cumulative affect of many is congestion.

“Better land use planning can reduce our need for new roadways, and can make our existing roadway infrastructure safer and more efficient.”

In addition, results from implementing meaningful land use policies are not immediate; instead only over time can the beneficial results become apparent.

What Can I Do?

Get involved in creating the future of your community. New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) encourages you and your community to implement land use policies that consolidate development, allow for multi-use development, and limit access to regional links of the roadway network. Your community has a number of tools it can use to influence land development:

A Master Plan, which is updated every five years and provides a vision of the future of the community as growth occurs;

A Capital Improvement Program, which is updated every year and sets forth the location and schedule of infrastructure improvements, which (like the transportation infrastructure) facilitates new development or redevelopment; and,

Zoning Regulations, which dictate what uses may be developed in a particular area, and what design elements are required, such as where buildings and parking may be located.



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There are also regional plans, which influence development and require citizen input:

- **Transportation plans**
- **Natural resource area preservation plans**
- **The Governor's sprawl initiative**

Working together, the team of you, your community, your RPC or MPO and the NHDOT can employ any or all of these general strategies to limit growth in roadway demand:

- **Grow in a responsible way within existing centers, or carefully considered new centers.**
- **Mix different land uses together – housing, commercial, and service retail – in a compact way to allow people to walk and bike between them.**
- **Limit the number of intersections and driveways on through highways, by using shared driveways or service roads.**
- **Promote options for and use of ridesharing and transit.**
- **Where possible, separate through highways from more compactly developed areas.**
- **Provide sidewalks and areas for bicycles along roadways and local streets to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.**
- **Provide continuous pathways to further promote safe and enjoyable walking and bicycling.**

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS THAT MERIT ATTENTION

NHDOT and other state agencies have a wealth of data which may be very helpful to communities as they strive to coordinate between transportation and land use. Examples include:

1 Noise projections are part of the environmental impacts evaluation of roadway construction projects. The projections indicate the areas affected by roadway noise, and may suggest alternative land use strategies for those areas.



2 Historic and cultural resources are catalogued and available to help communities plan for preservation and development strategies.



3 Mapping of wetlands and other important natural resources is available to help communities plan preservation strategies and promote appropriate development planning.



These are only a few examples. Through close partnerships between NHDOT, its sister agencies, regional agencies and local interests, these and other environmental assessment issues may foster land use strategies which not only promote better mobility options, but also better communities.